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## Cover Page Footnote

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# Muslim Tourist Behaviour and Intention to Revisit non-Muslim Countries: The Role of Muslim-Friendly Tourism (MFT) Attributes

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This study examines the Muslim traveller's perception of Muslim-Friendly Tourism (MFT) attributes in non-Muslim countries and how these MFT attributes affect their revisit intention. This study utilises purposive sampling, where only Malaysian Muslims who have been to non-Muslim countries were selected as the respondents. A cross-sectional study which includes a self-reported and self-administered survey questionnaire is used. Two hundred and fifty-three (253) respondents participated in the survey. Partial-least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) is used to confirm the research hypotheses. The structural model assessment demonstrates that out of the five MFT attributes, only the social environments and Halal food and beverage availability significantly influenced Muslim tourists revisit intention. The study findings are of high value for travel operators interested in investing in the Muslim markets. The study findings help non-Muslim destination marketers formulate a favourable tourism product and destination image for Muslim travellers.

**Key Words:** Muslim tourist, behaviour, revisit intention, Muslim Friendly Tourism (MFT), PLS-SEM

## Introduction

Due to the large and increasing population of Muslims globally, the tourism sector has gained benefits from Muslim travellers. The Muslim market is rapidly growing from year to year; thus, affecting the demand for Muslim-friendly Tourism (MFT) products and services (Han *et al.*, 2019; Rahman *et al.*, 2017). There are currently numerous concepts to cover this sector, such as Islamic tourism, *Shariah* compliance tourism, and Halal tourism with the growing acceptance of the concept worldwide (Battour & Ismail, 2016; Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral, 2019). Specifically, Islamic tourism refers to visiting places for religious purposes (Henderson, 2009) while the *Shariah*-compliant tourism is the strictest as every travelling attribute must adhere to the *Shariah* law (Jaelani, 2017). Meanwhile, Halal tourism is less stringent, and only focuses on Halal food and beverage preparation (Battour & Ismail, 2016). The Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC) have defined MFT as

*the activities of Muslim travellers who do not wish to compromise their faith-based needs while travelling for a purpose, which is permissible* (Cetin & Dincer, 2016).

Currently, MFT had been widely promoted by Muslim and non-Muslim countries to generate inbound Muslim tourists. The Muslim travel market was estimated to be worth US\$140 billion in 2015, and it comprised about 13 per cent of total global travel (Chandra, 2014). According to Oktadiana *et al.* (2016), Middle Eastern tourists, especially from Saudi Arabia, are the world's largest outbound Muslim market. In 2015, Muslim tourist expenditure reached about US\$145 billion globally where Muslim tourists have spent US\$34 billion in the United States followed by Europe (US\$29 billion), Saudi Arabia (US\$8.2 billion), United Arab Emirates (US\$7.8 billion) and Turkey (US\$7.3 billion). It has also generated more than US\$50 billion in Gross Domestic Product (Global Economic Impact of Muslim Tourism, 2016). Rasheed (2018) claimed that the Muslim tourism sector's revenues were originally expected to reach US\$192 billion by 2020.

Battour and Ismail (2016) claimed an association between the rapidly growing interest in the MFT market and the growth of the global Muslim population. Meanwhile, according to El-Gohary (2016), MFT can be considered as meeting the basic needs and wants of Muslim travellers based on their religious behaviour and daily lifestyle. Even non-Muslim countries (non-OIC countries) such as the United Kingdom, Spain, Germany, France, Japan, India, and Singapore are marketing themselves as MFT destination (World Halal Tourism Summit, 2015). Notably, these countries' key strength lies in their local Muslim populations, enabling them to develop a robust Halal food and Muslim friendly services eco-system (COMCEC, 2016).

As MFT is a new concept, especially in non-Muslim countries, non-Muslim destination managers and policymakers face challenges and difficulties to understand how to start advancing this market (Hall & Prayag, 2019; Han *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, El-Gohary (2016) argues that MFT branding might give out the wrong perception and impression that all the activities and products are only for Muslim customers. Due to the differences in demands between non-Muslim and Muslim tourists, developing MFT is not an easy task for non-Muslim countries (Alserhan & Alserhan, 2012; Battour & Ismail, 2016; El-Gohary, 2016).

## Literature Review

### *Tourism in Islam*

Muslims who want to travel must follow the rules of Shariah law – a law derived from the sayings of the Prophet and based on the Hadith and the Qur'an (Esposito, 1999). According to Laderlah *et al.* (2011), a Muslim practices the Five Pillars of Islam - the obligations that every Muslim must adhere according to Islamic teachings and the Shariah law. The five pillars consist of

- (i) reciting the Shahadah;
- (ii) performing ritual prayers five times each day;
- (iii) paying the Zakat to the poor and the needy;
- (iv) fasting during the month of Ramadan and;
- (v) performing Hajj in Mecca.

Travelling to other destinations around the world is also promoted in the Quran. However, travelling activities must adhere to Islamic law, including transportation, accommodation, tourism activities, and consumption aspects. It is important to note that Muslim tourists

must continue performing their religious activities such as praying and consuming *Halal* food (Battour *et al.*, 2011). Thus, Islamic religious attributes are essential as a Muslim decides to travel abroad.

According to Mohsin *et al.* (2016), MFT can be seen as the arrangement of tourism products and services that fulfil the needs of Muslim travellers to help and ease worship and dietary requirement according to Islamic teachings. MFT can be considered as meeting the needs and wants of Muslim travellers according to their religious behaviour and lifestyles (Vargas-Sánchez & Perano, 2017). Moreover, El-Gohary (2016) claims that MFT comprises activities that are allowable, acceptable, permitted and permissible by Islamic teachings. Boğan and Sarıışık (2019), in their research, claim that the availability of *Halal* food, certified foodservice and ability to perform prayers are the core attributes of MFT. Alserhan and Alserhan (2012) on the other hand propose that the production of *Halal* food in international tourism destinations should adhere to Islamic requirements and not contain ingredients that are prohibited in Islamic teachings. Meanwhile, according to Mansfeld *et al.* (2000), placing a copy of the Quran in every room with ablution area and a *Qibla* sticker (Stickers with an arrow pointing to Mecca's direction) on the wall is an example of basic MFT practices by the hospitality industry.

### *Muslim Friendly Tourism (MFT)*

Although only limited information is available on the characteristics of MFT in academic literature, a few studies have tried to define MFT, the practice, and its various aspects in reference to the hospitality and tourism industry. According to Jafari and Scott (2014), there are certain realities about Islam that provide an essential understanding of the customers' demands when it comes to the MFT market. For instance, while travelling to both Muslim and non-Muslim destinations, Muslim travellers still practice their religion without fail. Based on a study of Halal and Haram concepts by Olya and Al-ansi (2018), specifically in the context of tourism, it has been shown that Muslim travellers are highly aware of the types of *Halal* products and services and this is closely related to their post-purchase behaviour. In Islam, travelling activities must be parallel to *Shariah* law: mainly in relation to Halal food and prayer facilities (Aziz, 2019; Battour & Ismail, 2016; Jafari & Scott, 2014).

To attract the MFT market, the tourism and hospitality industry has to consider different aspects of their business; i.e. food and beverages, accommodation, transportation, and places and facilities of attraction. Stephenson (2014) has identified a classification of tangible and intangible MFT elements. For instance, Halal tourism principles include a set of services available in the hospitality industry, and one of them is human resources management (e.g. the uniforms of the staff and their ethics). The next aspect involves marketing, promotions, and other facilities made available for the public such as no gambling, casinos or nightclubs in the premises (Hall & Prayag, 2019; Han *et al.*, 2019; Hanafiah & Hamdan, 2020). Such broad ranging requirements contribute to the challenges faced by non-Muslim destination managers and the policymakers on how to effectively start advancing this new market (Aziz, 2019; Han *et al.*, 2019; Han & Hyun, 2017).

Hanafiah and Hamdan (2020) state that various MFT products and services are critical aspects of Muslim tourists' choice of destinations, especially for devout and religious Muslims. Moreover, Sriprasert, Chainin, and Rahman (2014) suggest that religiosity is a factor that will affect Muslim travelling behaviour as they will continue to practice their fundamental Islamic concepts while travelling. Thus, to create MFT environments, destination must incorporate Islamic compliance features in the tourism destination attributes (El-Gohary, 2016; Han *et al.*, 2019; Junaidi, 2020). These attributes include the availability of Halal food and beverages, praying mats and rooms, and accommodation amenities with separate male and female sections.

Mohsin *et al.* (2016) state that international destinations should be aware of Muslim travellers' needs and wants. There is also a need to establish a strategic plan to attract this MFT segment. After all, Muslim tourists may not travel to a specific destination due to the absence of the essential MFT attributes (El-Gohary, 2016; Junaidi, 2020). Recent literature suggests that topics pertaining to MFT are not sufficiently covered by tourism researchers (Battour, 2018; Eid & El-Gohary, 2015; Hall & Prayag, 2019; Jafari & Sandıkcı, 2015; Junaidi, 2020; Rahman *et al.*, 2019; Rasul, 2019). Therefore, this study examines Muslim tourists' perception of MFT attributes available in non-Muslim countries and which of these attributes affect their behavioural intention the most. Specifically, this study examines the effect of MFT attributes on Muslim travellers' revisit intention.

## Hypotheses Development

### *The influence of MFT social environment on Muslim tourist's revisit intention*

El-Gohary (2016) proposed that for tourism products and services to be Muslim-friendly, they should comply with *Shariah* law. The social environment of MFT destinations includes the local lifestyle, decorations and designs at the tourist places, hotels, and restaurants. Muslim tourists prefer to visit places with a Halal environment (alcohol-free and gambling-free) and where people adhere to Islamic dress codes with a control on liberalism atmosphere (El-Gohary, 2016; Han & Hyun, 2017). MFT products and services should not be offered in places that comprise of non-Halal products or activities (e.g., bars or red light districts) (Battour, 2018; Battour *et al.*, 2018). It is believed that many MFT providers do not satisfy all the needs and wants of Muslim travellers (Han & Hyun, 2017). Notably, most MFT providers (hotels, companies, etc.) in non-Muslim countries still offer non-Halal products and services to their Muslim customers due to a lack of understanding of what MFT is all about. Therefore, based on the given justification, the hypothesis below is formulated:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** The MFT social environment influences Muslim tourist's revisit intention.

### *The influence of MFT facilities on Muslim tourist's revisit intention*

Many tourism operators realise that to cater to the MFT market, facilities play an essential role in attracting Muslim visitors (Aziz, 2019; Rahman, 2014). It is the tour operator's responsibility to understand the needs and wants of Muslim travellers if they intend to offer services to the Muslim tourist (El-Gohary, 2016; Han & Hyun, 2017). Weidenfeld (2006) found that tourism providers need to cater to Muslim tourists' elementary religious needs such as the provision of a praying room, praying mats and Halal foods. The provision of mosques / prayer facilities at key tourism areas such as tourist information centres, airports, hotels and parks would satisfy Muslim tourists (El-Gohary, 2016). Also, providing specific worship facilities for Muslim tourists may encourage them to revisit a particular destination (Battour, 2018; Battour & Ismail, 2016). Based on the given justification, the hypothesis below is formulated:

**H<sub>2</sub>:** MFT facilities influence Muslim tourist's revisit intention.



### ***The influence of halal food and beverages on Muslim tourist's revisit intention***

Muslims' lives revolve around the concept of Halal, which means those things that are permissible by Shariah law and by doing so, they must avoid Haram-related activities. Halal is mostly related to food and drink, thus, consuming Halal food and beverages is part of a Muslim's lifestyle (El-Gohary, 2016; Riaz & Chaudry, 2003). Therefore, tourism destinations need to ensure Halal food and beverages are available in order to attract the Muslim market. Notably, improvements in transportation and communication technologies and the globalisation of markets, trade, and labour, have all contributed to the supply of Halal food worldwide (Battour *et al.*, 2014; Cwiertka & Walraven, 2013). Ensuring that premises and restaurants are Halal certified would generate Muslim consumer trust (Battour *et al.*, 2014). However, according to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (2011), in non-Muslim countries, the concept of Halal food remains overlooked. With the increase in demand and awareness of MFT, Halal foods have become an attractive industry due to the vast target market, even for non-Muslim countries. Therefore, based on the given justification, the following hypothesis is formulated:

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Halal Food and Beverages influence Muslim tourist's revisit intention.

### ***The influence of MFT service quality on Muslim tourist's revisit intention***

MFT is all about Muslim tourists' experience and satisfaction of tourism product and services (Battour *et al.*, 2014; Han & Hyun, 2017; Rahman, 2014). According to Aziz (2019), tourism operators should meet Muslim tourists' needs by providing their necessities. Liu *et al.* (2018) propose that MFT destinations should provide not only Halal services (such as Halal food and beverages, different swimming pools for male, female and families, etc.) but should also ensure their complimentary services which would allow the Muslims to perform their basic religious activities within the tourism destination. Currently, MFT services and products are made available in airports, hotels, and restaurants; mostly offered by Muslim-favoured destinations but neglected by most non-Muslim destinations (Rahman *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, based on the given justification, the following hypothesis is formulated:

**H<sub>4</sub>:** MFT service quality influences Muslim tourist's revisit intention.

### ***The Influence of MFT local behaviour on Muslim tourist's revisit intention***

Attitudes of locals towards Muslim tourists also warrant attention (Henderson, 2009). A proactive host is vital in offering a positive destination image by which they create positive word-of-mouth reports (Han *et al.*, 2019; Sriprasert *et al.*, 2014). As a preparation to entertain the Muslim market, MFT stakeholders (locals and staff) should be educated to understand the concept of MFT practices (Battour & Ismail, 2016). Besides continuous training, it is also common for most MFT stakeholders (e.g. restaurants and hotels) to employ Muslim employees to ensure improved compliance in their operation (Junaidi, 2020; Liu *et al.*, 2018). This practice is further supported by Mohsin *et al.* (2016). These researchers opine that Muslim tourists are bound to feel more comfortable with destinations that follow Islamic practices in diet, attire, and custom. Based on the given justification, the following hypothesis is formulated:

**H<sub>5</sub>:** local behaviour in MFT destinations influences Muslim tourist's revisit intention.

## **Methodology**

This study examines whether the MFT attributes (i.e.: social environments, facilities, Halal food and beverages, service quality and local behaviour) in non-Muslim countries affect the Muslim tourists' behavioural intention.

The unit analysis and the sample are Muslim travellers with the experience of travelling to non-Muslim countries. This study applies a quantitative approach to a causal type of investigation. A cross-sectional study which utilised a self-reported and self-administered survey questionnaire was used. Since the study population was unknown, a non-probability purposive sampling approach was employed. Only Muslim travellers with the experience of travelling to any non-Muslim countries were chosen as respondents.

The survey instruments were adopted from studies by Battour *et al.* (2014), Han and Hyun (2017) and Rahman (2014). The survey consists of three different sections. Section A solicits the respondents' demographic information. Meanwhile, Section B measures their perception towards the five (5) MFT attributes: social environments, facilities, Halal food and beverages, service quality and local behaviour. Lastly, Section C examines their revisit intention. For this section, the

**Table 1: Pilot Survey Instrument Assessments**

Variables	Items	Type of scale	Cronbach Alpha
MFT Social Environments	7	5-point Likert-scale type, ranging from 1-5 (1=Strongly Disagree, to 5=Strongly Agree)	0.891
MFT Facilities	4		0.848
<i>Halal</i> Food and Beverages	4		0.873
MFT Service Quality	4		0.851
MFT Locals Behaviour	3		0.836
Revisit Intention	3		0.911

respondents are required to provide their point of view on a range of issues, using a five-point Likert scale that ranges between 1 = 'strongly disagree' to 5 = 'strongly agree'.

A pilot study was initially conducted to verify the research instruments' validity and reliability (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Besides optimising face validity, the reliability of the survey instruments was tested. The pilot survey instrument assessments are presented in Table 1. The Cronbach Alpha values are all greater than 0.70; indicating high instruments reliability (Pallant, 2013; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

The researchers administered the survey with the help of three research assistants. Despite some difficulties, a total of 302 questionnaires were collected but only 253 were found usable. The non-useable responses (47) were excluded due to data incompleteness.

Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was utilised to test the research framework. As this study focuses on the prediction orientation of a less developed theory in MFT; it seems that PLS-SEM is the preferred method for this study (Hanafiah, 2020; Sinkovics, Richter, Ringle, & Schlaegel, 2016). Also, Vinzi, Lauro, and Amato (2005) suggest that PLS-SEM is particularly useful for causal-predictive analysis.

Based on the examination of literature, most MFT or Halal tourism-related studies utilise covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM) (Battour & Ismail, 2016; Han & Hyun, 2017). While the CB-SEM approach is dominant, studies on MFT are still in the theory confirmation stage, thus, PLS-SEM approach is considered suitable concerning the researcher's prediction-oriented objective (Chin, 2010; Hanafiah, 2020). PLS-SEM path models consist of a two-step approach which involves estimating the measurement model before undertaking an analysis of the structural model (Chin, 2010; Hair *et al.*, 2016). Using the SmartPLS 3.1 software, this study assessed the study measurement model considerations (reflective construct) and reported the structural modelling result.

## Results and Data Analysis

### *Demographic Data: Respondents Profile*

All 253 respondents were examined using descriptive statistic. Their demographic data: age, gender, marital status, education level, travelling frequency to non-Muslim countries, and the purpose of travelling to the destinations are reported in Table 2. This table illustrates that the majority of the respondents were between 18 and 25 years of age, with 86.6% (n=219). Most of the respondents were female, with 58.9% (n=149) and 41.1% (n=104) were male. The majority were single with 86.2%

**Table 2: Demographic Profile**

Demographic Variables		No.	%	Demographic Variables		No.	%
Age	18 to 25 years	219	86.6	Education Level	Diploma	23	9.1
	26 to 30 years	27	10.7		Degree	193	76.3
	31 to 40 years	5	2		Masters / PhD	27	10.7
	41 years and above	2	0.8		Other	10	4
Gender	Male	104	41.9	Purpose of travel	Visiting friends & relatives	27	10.7
	Female	149	58.1		Leisure & recreation	124	49
Marital status	Single	218	86.2		Education	64	25.3
	Married	35	13.8		Business	30	11.9
Travel Frequency to non-Muslim countries	Once a year	197	77.9		Religious activities	8	3.2
	More than once in a year	56	22.1				
N=253							

(n=218). Most of the respondents possessed degree qualification with 76.3%; (n=193). 77.9% (n=197) of the respondents claim that they travel once a year to non-Muslim countries while 22.1% (n=56) claim they travel more than once in a year to non-Muslim countries. Almost half of the respondents represented by 49% (n=124) travel to non-Muslim countries for leisure and recreation, followed by 25.3% (n=64) for educational purposes. The top ten non-Muslim destinations visited are Singapore, Thailand, United Kingdom, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Germany, France, and Australia.

### Descriptive Analysis

This section descriptively interprets the five MFT attributes: social environment, facilities, food and beverages, service quality and local behaviour. The descriptive analysis was translated using the 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree) to describe the result. SPSS version 22 software was used to calculate the mean score and the standard deviation.

The first MFT attribute is the *social environment*. From the descriptive analysis, the respondents enjoy the Muslim-friendly social environment (M=3.59,

**Table 3: Descriptive Analysis of MFT Attributes**

MFT Attributes		Mean	Standard Deviation
<b>MFT Social Environment</b>			
<b>A1</b>	The design and decoration of tourist places are Muslim-friendly (e.g. paintings, pictures, architecture).	3.42	0.770
<b>A2</b>	The atmospherics of tourist places are Muslim-friendly.	3.38	0.796
<b>A3</b>	The Muslim-friendly social environment of tourist places is comfortable.	3.51	0.876
<b>A4</b>	My overall experiences with Muslim-friendly social environment in tourist places are good.	3.52	0.838
<b>A6</b>	The social environment of tourist places is tolerable for Muslim travellers.	3.48	0.857
<b>A7</b>	At the tourist sites, I enjoyed the Muslim-friendly social environment.	3.59	0.814
<b>MFT Facilities</b>			
<b>B1</b>	It is convenient to find a mosque / prayer room.	3.45	0.923
<b>B2</b>	Muslim-friendly facilities are widely offered in tourist places and sites.	3.33	0.855
<b>B3</b>	Separate male and female Muslim facilities are offered in tourist sites (e.g. Spas, swimming pool, etc.).	3.26	0.943
<b>B4</b>	Prayer room facilities are offered in tourist places.	3.52	0.875
<b>Halal Food and Beverages</b>			
<b>C1</b>	Halal food outlets / restaurants in tourist sites display a Halal logo.	3.50	0.834
<b>C2</b>	Halal food and beverages offered in tourist sites / places were clean, safe and hygienic.	3.52	0.809
<b>C3</b>	Halal food providers in tourist sites are accredited with Halal certification.	3.51	0.848
<b>C4</b>	Availability of Halal food attracted me to visit tourist places.	3.62	0.885
<b>MFT Service Quality</b>			
<b>D1</b>	Muslim-friendly information in tourist sites is widely offered (e.g. flyers, brochures).	3.49	0.857
<b>D2</b>	Tourist information centres offer Muslim-friendly service information.	3.53	0.828
<b>D3</b>	Muslim-friendly services in tourist places are effectively offered in a different language (e.g. Arabic, Malay).	3.40	0.870
<b>D4</b>	Muslim-friendly services offered in tourist places conform to Islamic law.	3.48	0.795
<b>MFT Locals Behaviour</b>			
<b>E1</b>	In tourist places, local staff are aware of Halal products and services.	3.50	0.820
<b>E2</b>	Local staff understood how to offer Halal products and services.	3.51	0.829
<b>E3</b>	The locals had a good understanding of Islam and Halal rules and practices.	3.47	0.833
<b>Muslim tourist's revisit intention</b>			
<b>F1</b>	I am satisfied with the Muslim-friendly attributes and services available at non-Muslim countries.	3.72	0.798
<b>F2</b>	I will recommend my family and friends to visit non-Muslim countries.	3.65	0.821
<b>F3</b>	I would like to visit other non-Muslim countries in the future.	3.66	0.829
N=253			



SD= 0.814) and the Halal-friendly social environment (M=3.52, SD=0.838). The respondents also agreed that the tourist places are comfortable (M=3.51, SD=0.876) and the tourist places are safe and clean for Muslim travellers (M=3.48, SD=0.857). Besides, the respondents are aware that the design and decoration of tourist places are Muslim-friendly (M=3.42, SD=0.770) and the atmospherics of tourist places comply with Islamic rules (M=3.38, SD= 0.796). Lastly, the respondents agree that the tourist destination is free of *Haram* elements (M=3.23, SD=0.943).

The next attribute is ***MFT facilities***. From the descriptive analysis, the respondents agreed that the tourist areas offer separate men and women prayer room facilities (M=3.52, SD=0.875) and it was convenient to have access to a mosque or prayer room (M=3.45, SD= 0.923). Furthermore, the respondents also agreed that ample Muslim-friendly facilities are offered for them in tourist places and sites (M=3.33, SD=0.855).

Another MFT attribute is ***Halal food and beverages***. From the descriptive analysis, the respondents agreed that the availability of Halal food at tourist places attracted them to visit that place (M=3.62, SD=0.885) and the restaurants are clean, safe and hygienic (M=3.52, SD=0.809). Moreover, the respondents also claimed that the Halal food providers in tourist sites are accredited with Halal certification (M=3.51, SD=0.848) and displayed the Halal logo (M=3.50, SD=0.834).

The next MFT attribute is ***service quality***. From the descriptive analysis, the respondents agreed that the tourist information centres at tourist places offer Muslim-friendly service information (M=3.53, SD= 0.828) and Muslim-friendly information is widely offered within the tourist sites (M=3.49, SD= 0.857). The respondents also agreed that Muslim-friendly services adhered Islamic law (M=3.48, SD=0.795).

The last MFT attribute is ***local behaviour***. From Table 3 the respondents agreed that the local staff in tourist places understand how to offer Halal products and services (M=3.51, SD=0.829) and they are well aware of Halal products and services (M=3.50, SD= 0.820). Lastly, the respondents perceived that the locals had a good understanding of Islamic and Halal rules (M=3.47, SD=0.833).

Looking at the descriptive analysis of Muslim tourists' ***revisit intentions***, the highest mean score shows that

the respondents are satisfied with the Muslim-friendly attributes and services available in non-Muslim countries (M=3.72, SD=0.798). Moreover, the respondents agreed that they plan to visit non-Muslim countries more often (M=3.66, SD=0.829). Lastly, the respondents also agreed that they would likely revisit non-Muslim countries in the future (M=3.65, SD=0.821).

## Hypothesis Testing

Since PLS-SEM is a non-parametric approach, it does not require the data to be normally distributed. However, to eliminate the assumption that the tested relationships among the constructs might be distorted by Common Method Variance (CMV), it is vital to perform Harman's single factor test. As Podsakoff *et al.* (2003) strongly regard, a single factor is reported to be one that is less than 50 percent. Since the results are generated based on the extraction method of principal axis factoring and the single factor is 36.31 percent, which is below 50%, it can be concluded that CMB's issue is not significant thus permits the measurement model assessment.

### Measurement model

The standard procedures of PLS-SEM analysis followed the approach proposed by Hair *et al.* (2016). The measurement model (Figure 1 and Table 4) is tested by assessing the validity and reliability of the survey instruments. To examine the reflective measurement models, the following are tested and validated:

- (i) internal consistency reliability,
- (ii) indicator reliability,
- (iii) convergent validity and
- (iv) discriminant validity (Chin, 2010; Hair *et al.*, 2013; Hanafiah, 2020).

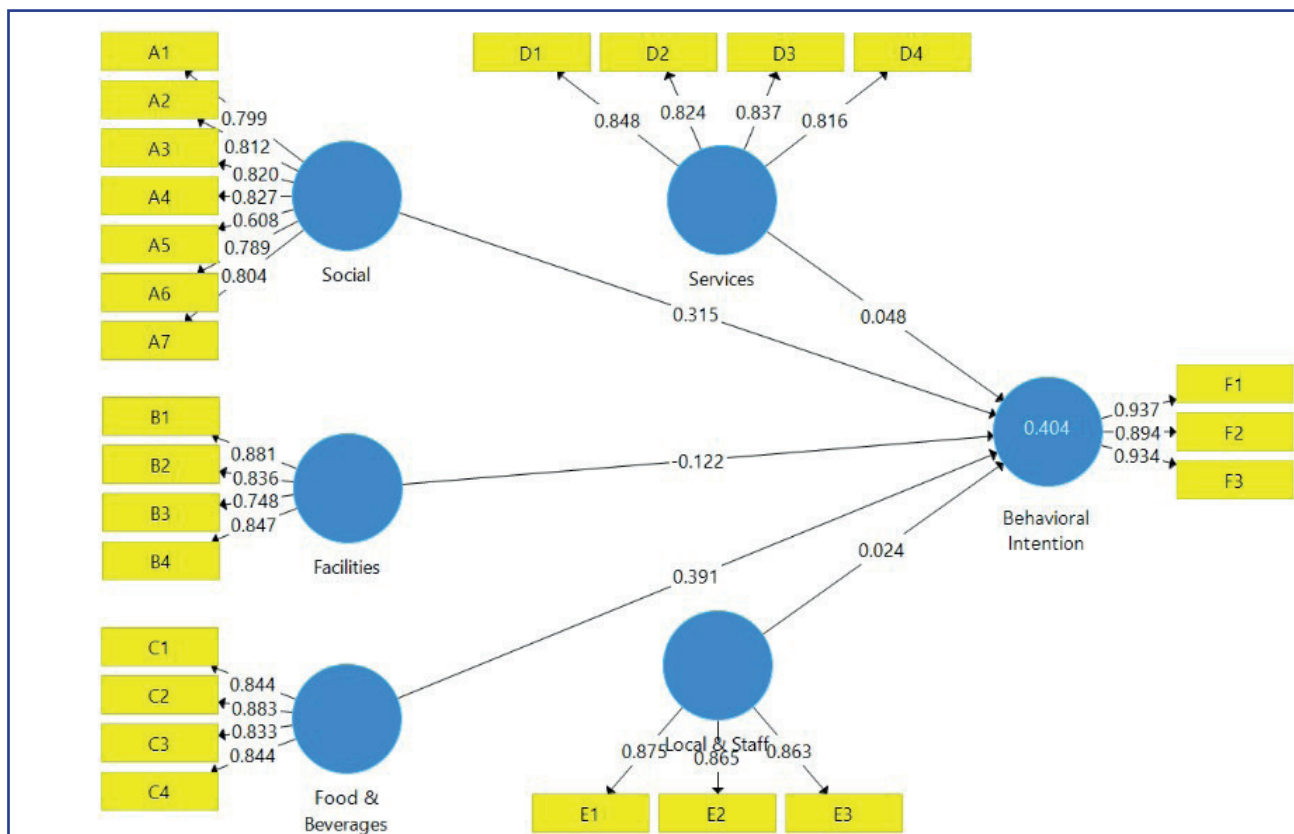
In line with this, Table 4 reports the outer loading, indicator reliability, composite reliability, AVE scores, and the Cronbach Alpha value. Figure 2 illustrated the results obtained for the PLS Algorithm/measurement model.

Based on Table 4, all items loaded significantly (loadings ranging from 0.748 to 0.937) onto their respective factors, thus verifying their indicator reliability (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Two items (A5 & E4) were removed as the factor loadings were less than 0.70. Next, the convergent validity was assessed based on the AVE values. The AVE values are as follows:

**Table 4: Measurement Model Assessment**

Instruments		Outer Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
MFT Social Environment					
A1	The design and decoration of tourist places are Muslim-friendly (e.g. paintings, pictures, architecture).	0.799	0.894	0.917	0.613
A2	The atmospherics of tourist places are Muslim-friendly.	0.812			
A3	The Muslim-friendly social environment of tourist places is comfortable.	0.820			
A4	My overall experiences with Muslim-friendly social environment in tourist places are good.	0.827			
A6	The social environment of tourist places is tolerable for Muslim travellers.	0.789			
A7	At the tourist sites, I enjoyed the Muslim-friendly social environment.	0.804			
MFT Facilities					
B1	It is convenient to find a mosque / prayer room.	0.881	0.849	0.898	0.688
B2	Muslim-friendly facilities are widely offered in tourist places and sites.	0.836			
B3	Separate male and female Muslim facilities are offered in tourist sites (e.g. Spas, swimming pool, etc.).	0.748			
B4	Prayer room facilities are offered in tourist places.	0.847			
Halal Food and Beverages					
C1	Halal food outlets / restaurants in tourist sites display a Halal logo.	0.844	0.874	0.913	0.724
C2	Halal food and beverages offered in tourist sites / places were clean, safe and hygienic.	0.883			
C3	Halal food providers in tourist sites are accredited with Halal certification.	0.833			
C4	Availability of Halal food attracted me to visit tourist places.	0.844			
MFT Service Quality					
D1	Muslim-friendly information in tourist sites is widely offered (e.g. flyers, brochures).	0.848	0.851	0.900	0.691
D2	Tourist information centres offer Muslim-friendly service information.	0.824			
D3	Muslim-friendly services in tourist places are effectively offered in a different language (e.g. Arabic, Malay).	0.837			
D4	Muslim-friendly services offered in tourist places conform to Islamic law.	0.816			
MFT Locals Behaviour					
E1	In tourist places, local staff are aware of Halal products and services.	0.875	0.836	0.902	0.753
E2	Local staff understood how to offer Halal products and services.	0.865			
E3	The locals had a good understanding of Islamic and Halal rules and practices.	0.863			
Behavioural Intention					
F1	I am satisfied with the Muslim-friendly attributes and services available in the non-Muslim countries.	0.937	0.912	0.944	0.850
F2	I will recommend my family and friends to visit non-Muslim countries.	0.894			
F3	I would like to visit other non-Muslim countries in the future.	0.934			
Deleted items: A5 & E4					

Figure 1: Measurement Model



- MFT social environment (0.613),
- MFT facilities (0.688),
- Halal food and beverages (0.724),
- MFT service quality (0.691),
- MFT local behaviour (0.753), and
- Muslim tourist's revisit intention (0.85).

All were well above the required minimum level of 0.50. Thus, the measurement model exceeds the convergent validity levels and exhibits high reliability as the factor loading, composite reliability (CR) and AVE analysis exceed the recommended cut-off parameters as suggested by Hair *et al.* (2013).

The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT) assessed the discriminant validity as Henseler *et al.* (2009) claim that HTMT could achieve high specificity and sensitivity rates as compared to the Fornell-Lacker as well as the cross-loadings criterion. Table 5 reports the HTMT test results.

In reference to the HTMT results, the values illustrated in Table 5 reveal that there is no discriminant validity problems present ( $HTMT < 0.90$  criterions). Therefore, it can certainly be implied that the HTMT criterion did not detect the collinearity problems present among the latent constructs. All in all, the measurement mode supports the discriminant validity between the constructs. Based on

Table 5: HTMT Assessment

Variables	MFT Facilities	Halal Food & Beverages	MFT Local Behaviour	Revisit Intention	MFT Service Quality	MFT Social Env.
MFT Facilities	1					
Halal Food & Beverages	0.892	1				
MFT Local Behaviour	0.848	0.820	1			
Revisit Intention	0.755	0.779	0.777	1		
MFT Service Quality	0.848	0.838	0.760	0.796	1	
MFT Social Environment	0.841	0.825	0.774	0.840	0.826	1

Table 6: Path Coefficients, Observed T-statistics, and Significance Levels

Hypotheses	$\beta$ -value	T -Statistics	P-Values	Result
MFT Social Environment -> Revisit intention	0.316***	3.015	0.003	Accept
MFT Facilities -> Revisit intention	-0.122	1.143	0.253	Reject
Halal Food & Beverages -> Revisit intention	0.397***	3.855	0.000	Accept
MFT Service Quality -> Revisit intention	0.049	0.493	0.622	Reject
MFT Local Behaviour -> Revisit intention	0.015	0.198	0.843	Reject

Notes:  $p < 0.05^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01^{***}$

the finalised measurement model, Muslim tourist's revisit intention (reflective constructs) can be explained by five reflective constructs that are MFT social environment, facilities, Halal food and beverages, service quality and local behaviour factors.

### Structural Modelling

The structural model assessment involved analysing the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), estimation of path coefficient ( $\beta$ ), effect size ( $f^2$ ) and prediction relevance ( $Q^2$ ). The path analysis reported the coefficient ( $\beta$ ) value. The significance of the regression coefficient  $\beta$  was based on t-values. Table 6 reports the path coefficients, observed t-statistics value and the significance levels based on the 95% confidence level.

The results of the path coefficients (Table 6) reveal that the MFT social environment ( $\beta=0.316^{***}$ ) and Halal food and beverages ( $\beta=0.397^{***}$ ) attributes were significant in explaining Muslim tourists' revisit intention. Meanwhile the remainder of the hypothesised relationships were insignificant (MFT facilities, services and local behaviour) predictors of Muslim tourists' revisit intention. It suggests that the MFT social environment and Halal food and beverage availability are the important determinants of Muslim tourists' revisit intention. Meanwhile, MFT facilities, services, and local behaviour are not vital antecedents of Muslim tourists' revisit intention.

This study confirms that for 42.4% ( $R^2 = 0.424$ ) of the variance in the Muslim tourists' revisit, the proposed predictors can explain the intention construct. Meanwhile, Götz, Liehr-Gobbers, and Krafft's (2010) test of predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ) was applied to determine the model's predictive relevance. Using an omission distance of 0.7, this study obtains a  $Q^2$  value of 0.462 for the behavioural intention, which indicates a highly predictive model (Chin, 2010; Hanafiah, 2020). Meanwhile, the inner model change in relation to the effect size is calculated

by employing effect size ( $f^2$ ) analysis by Chin (2010). This study found that Halal food & beverages and MFT social environment's effect size on revisit intention is substantial. On the other hand, the effect size of MFT local behaviour and service quality on revisit intention is moderate.

### Discussion

Muslim-friendly Tourism (MFT) has gained popularity in the recent past due to the Muslim population's growing interest in international tourism destinations (Aziz, 2019; Rahman *et al.*, 2019; Rahman *et al.*, 2017; Rasul, 2019). As the number of Muslim travellers is growing, understanding MFT attributes is vital for international destinations in creating and sustaining the MFT demand (Hall & Prayag, 2019). This study attempts to understand how non-Muslim countries' MFT attributes affect Muslim tourists' experience and revisit intention. According to the wide range of literatures, there are five main MFT attributes, namely social environment, tourist facilities, food and beverages, service quality and local and staff behaviour (Cetin & Dincer, 2016; Eid & El-Gohary, 2015; Hanafiah & Hamdan, 2020; Liu *et al.*, 2018; Oktadiana *et al.*, 2016). However, not all of these equally influence Muslim tourists' revisit intention. This study found that only MFT social environment and Halal food and beverages are significant predictors of Muslim tourists' revisit intention.

The study results confirm the proposition by Han *et al.* (2018) and Mohsin *et al.* (2016) who propose that offering MFT products and services in non-Muslim tourism destinations is important, in order to woo the Muslim market. This study confirms Han and Hyun's (2017) assertion that the social environment is vital if a destination wants to offer MFT products and packages. This study also confirms that a friendlier environment could make a better impression not only for Muslim tourists (Aziz, 2019; Chandra, 2014). The present study



results are consistent with those of previous studies. Besides offerings a MFT social environment, it is essential to make Halal food widely available. Notably, Halal foods are considered the uppermost priority for Muslim tourists (Junaidi, 2020; Mohsin *et al.*, 2016).

This study also confirms that Muslim travellers practice their religion as part of their daily lives even while travelling. This study's results are in line with Olya and Al-Ansi's (2018) study by which they claimed that Muslim travellers will always consume *Halal* products and services while travelling. Appreciably, in the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2018 by Mastercard-Crescent Rating, many non-Muslim destinations recognised that the availability of Halal food and prayer facilities could make destinations more Muslim-friendly. However, failing to offer the Halal services needed by Muslim tourists will jeopardise the effort to target and advance the growing Muslim market (Han *et al.*, 2018).

## Conclusion

There is no doubt that MFT is evolving due to new trends shaping and changing how and why Muslims travel. Currently, it is a rapidly growing market. Given that Muslim tourism is a niche product, destination marketers should pay more attention to the common issues that arise while Muslims travel, especially when visiting a non-Muslim nation. The non-Muslim tourism destinations should only promote MFT packages if they understand the tangible and non-tangible MFT products and services demanded by Muslim travellers. The tangible MFT attributes include prayer facilities and Halal food availability, while the non-tangible MFT attributes include entertainment and activities that follow the code of Islamic morality. The proposed intangible aspects of MFT may represent challenges for tourism and hospitality stakeholders in non-Muslim countries.

This study's findings should help marketers better understand what Muslim tourists are and how to develop better MFT products and thereby formulate niche marketing strategies to attract Muslim tourists. By understanding what they want and need, the non-Muslim tourism destination marketers can satisfy them - providing high-quality MFT products and services. Some of the latest MFT services offered by Japan, Singapore and the Netherlands include the availability of Muslim friendly airport facilities, more prayer spaces and ablution facilities provided in public places and

hotels. This study's findings also contribute to the body of knowledge by identifying the key MFT attributes and how these attributes affect Muslim travel behaviour.

The MFT embodies a challenge to current and new destination marketers, as while trying to woo the Muslim travellers, they also need to appease the non-Muslim tourist's demands. The tourism businesses and marketers must also treat local residents as essential stakeholders and include their point of view regarding MFT, to avoid creating friction in encounters with Muslim tourists. Thus, to satisfy both the Muslim and non-Muslim tourists, tourism authorities and businesses could promote MFT as family-friendly tourism - helping to attract Muslim tourists and retain the non-Muslim market segments.

However, this study has limitations related to the context of the study. This research is limited to Malaysian Muslims visiting non-Muslim countries. Thus, the results cannot be generalised. Furthermore, there was a predominance of younger respondents to the survey, and this may also influence the findings. Therefore, further research could focus on different MFT tourism markets, particularly the Indonesian and the Middle East tourists as they are typically more conservative than Malaysian tourists. Such studies would help improve the understanding of what Muslim tourists want and need while travelling outbound and how cultural differences affect their travel demands.

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